Central American NEWSLETTER

Newsletter of the Central American Group of the Spanish Main Society.

Editor: Bernard Davies, 16, Lynwood Close, Gordon Road, South Woodford, London E18 1DP 01-504-5042

Issue No.12 June 1983

EDITORIAL

As we come to the end of our third year's existence, the Editor pleads with you, yet again, to keep us supplied with short articles and with comments and questions for the "Causerie". He is particularly anxious to receive material relating to Salvador and Honduras. Currently we could fill the Newsletter with Nicaraguan material (and we hope that this, too, keeps flowing) but we receive almost nothing about some other countries. Without your assistance we may well disappoint those who collect the C.A. countries other than Nicaragua; on this occasion, for instance, the Editor has been forced to dig into his few remaining notes on Costa Rica, dating from the days when he bought the Hartland-Swann airmail collection from Francis Field, a collection which he had perforce to sell some years ago in order to concentrate on Nicaragua, Salvador and Honduras. Surely there must be someone who could have supplied this information more definitively, fully and interestingly? Please rouse yourselves, remembering that this is a Newsletter in which we exchange information, not a magazine in which we hand it out.

We are publishing Doug. Bayliss' useful and interesting notes on Guatemala Ambulantes without reference illustrations, in the belief that most of our members will have access to "Guatemala 2". If readers find it difficult to refer to this excellent publication, please inform us and we'll try to obtain permission to reproduce the relevant key illustrations.

Finally, remember SPANISH MAIN'S A.G.M. and auction at the Victory Services Club, Seymour Street, near Marble Arch, from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m., on July 9th. Important matters of future club policy may be decided.

Bernard Davies

THE U.S. LAND-BASED OFFICES OF THE TWO NICARAGUAN CAMPAIGNS by Michael P Birks

It had been my intention in this second US Marine article to follow the previous listing of ships involved, with a listing and illustration of known types of postmarks which were allocated to those ships. Following the publication of that first listing, Kilian Nathan very kindly sent several xeroxes of covers in his collection, and must be wondering by now to what use (if any) they have been put. I have however recently come across a promising line of research in my study of Marine postmarks, and so I have decided to delay this aspect until I have fully explored this probably fruitful lead.

I was going to follow that second piece with a re-hash of Robert Gordon's article in the American Philatelist, concerning the land based post offices of the Marines, and so I have decided to deal with this aspect here.

The First Nicaraguan Campaign

Following a serious revolutionary outbreak in July 1912, the "USS Annapolis" set sail for Nicaragua (probably on 29 July, as this is the first date of eligibility for the first campaign medal). Upon arrival on 4 August 1912, a detachment of sailors proceeded to Managua, where a regular Legation Guard of about 105 Marines was established from 9 January 1913 to 1 August 1925.

It is believed that until 1922 there were no US post offices established ashore, and all mail prior to that date which has come to light is cancelled with ship postmarks.

A post office under the name of MARINE DETACHMENT, AMERICAN LEGATION, MANAGUA, was in existence between 23 March 1922 and August/September 1925. No distinct postmarks have come to light from this office, nor from the MARINE BARRACKS, AMERICAN LEGATION, MANAGUA office, listed in the official postal guides of 1923-9 inclusive.

The Second Nicaraguan Campaign

Within three months of the Marines departing, another revolution broke out, on 25 October 1925. Throughout 1926 (26 August 1926 is the first date of eligibility for the second campaign medal), various small detachments of Marines landed at various points, to protect life and property. Ship deployment details suggest that the "USS Cleveland", had the greatest early involvement, from December 1925, being joined in August 1926 by the "USS Rochester", in September by the "USS Gilmer", and later by various other ships including the gunboat "USS Tulsa".

A deteriorating situation resulted in landings in Bluefields on 10 January 1927, and in Corinto on 7 March following, but from mid-June these forces were reduced.

Renewed bandit activities resulted in the landing of the Eleventh Regiment and an aviation squadron on 9 January 1928. The Marines, as well as keeping the peace formed and trained a National Guard which took over the security of the country, when they departed in 1933.

As with the first campaign, distinctive postmarks have not come to light for the early offices. It may be that cancellers were not supplied; indeed I think that this is more likely than the alternative of examples not surfacing, in view of the numbers of Marines involved.

The three offices for which no distinctive strikes are known are:-

SECOND BRIGADE, FIFTH REGIMENT, MARINE CORPS SPECIAL SERVICE SQUADRON, CORINTO.
This office existed from 1 February to 30 June 1927.

MARINE BARRACKS, EXPEDITIONARY FORCES, NICARAGUA.
This office existed from 7 March to 15 December 1927.

ELEVENTH REGIMENT, USMC, US NAVAL FORCES ASHORE IN WESTERN NICARAGUA, LEON, NICARAGUA.
This office opened on 1 June 1927, but it is not known when it closed.

Four major types of postmark are known for the United States Marine Corps; with variants the total number of different postmarks is nine.

FIFTH REGIMENT, USMC/MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
This postmark is similar to figure 1, but with smaller lettering, and was in use at the same time as figure 1 (which has "REGIMENT" shortened to "REG"). These postmarks are the earliest known recorded for the land-based Marines, and are known used between August 1927 and July 1930.
A similar postmark with "5TH" for "FIFTH" is known in use between July and October 1930.

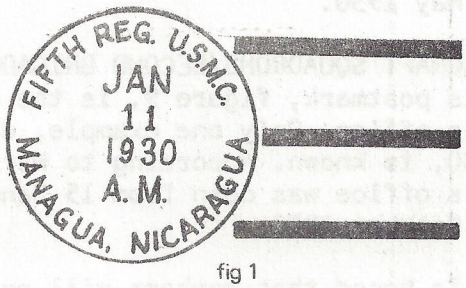


fig 1

USMC 5TH REG 2D BRIG/MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
Figure 2 was a steel handstamp in use between October 1928 and April 1929

fig 2

5TH REG USMC MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
Figure 3 differs mainly from the previous postmarks in that the wording is spelt out continuously around the circle. It is known used between December 1930 and March 1931.
A similar postmark with smaller lettering, and no comma after "USMC" is known used between July 1931 and December 1932.

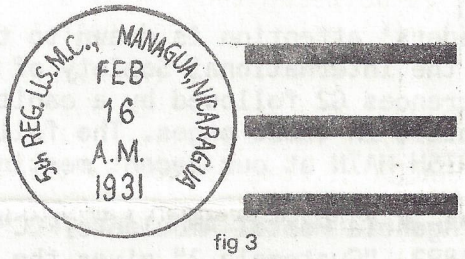


fig 3

USMC 5th Reg 2d Brig Managua Nicaragua
A postmark with this inscription, between double circles, similar to figure 4, but with "Registered" removed, is known used in May and June 1931 only.
A similar postmark with the lower case lettering replaced by capitals has been seen with a May 1931 date only.
Figure 4 has been seen with a July 1929 date only.

Two postmarks are recorded for the Marine Corps Expeditionary Forces.

fig 4

fig 7

MARINE CORPS EXP FORCES/NICARAGUA
The postmark illustrated as figure 5 is known used between September 1927 and May 1928.

NEW YORK NY/USMC EXP FORCES, NICARAGUA BR
This second postmark, figure 6, is known used between October 1929 and September 1930.

One postmark is recorded for the Eleventh Regiment.

(Eleventh Reg Second Bri USMC)/Registered
This postmark, figure 7, is known from an office which operated from 14 February 1928 to 20 August 1929.

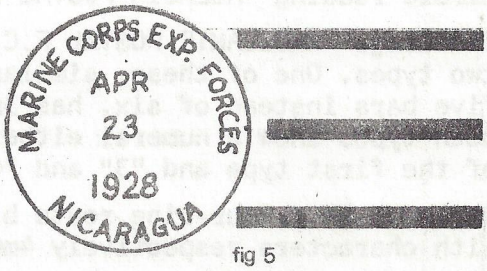


fig 5

SECOND BRIGADE, USMC, MANAGUA, NICARAGUA
From Marine Corps records, it is known that an office under this name opened 1 July, 1928, but no postmarks have been recorded. It is not known when this office closed.

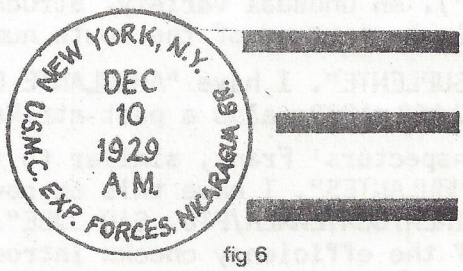


fig 6

NICARAGUAN NATIONAL GUARD DETACHMENT, MANAGUA, NICARAGUA.
This office can be found listed in both the 1931 Official Postal Guide, and the Marine Corps records, which dates the office from 10 April 1931, to 2 January 1933. No postmarks are known however.

H'DQTS, E AREA, PUERTO CABEZAS, SECOND BRIGADE, NICARAGUA
Figure 8 is known used from October 1929 to May 1930, although the office was open from 12 August 1928 to 11 May 1930.

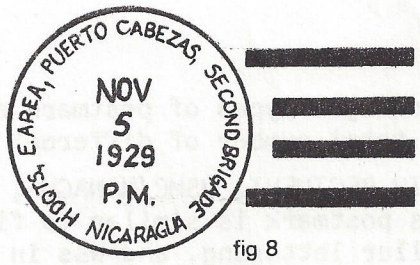


fig 8

AIRCRAFT SQUADRONS/SECOND BRIGADE USMC
This postmark, figure 9, is the only one known from this office. Only one example, dated 17 September 1930, is known. According to Marine Corps records, this office was open from 15 January 1930 to 15 October 1932.

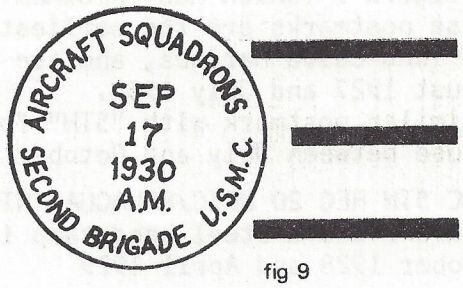


fig 9

It is hoped that members will examine any relevant covers they may have, and report any extensions/alterations/additions via the editor. Information is scant, and it appears that there is ample scope for developing this listing.

SOME NOTES ON GUATEMALA AMBULANTES by DOUGLAS BAYLISS

(Readers' attention is drawn to the section on AMBULANTES in the Robson Lowe publication for the International Society of Guatemala Collectors, GUATEMALA 2 pp 595-601. References G2 followed by a capital letter in these notes are to the illustrations so labelled in those pages. The following notes are based on a display given to the SPANISH MAIN at our recent meeting devoted to TPO's and other Railway matters. - Ed.)

1. "Agencia Postal Ambulante/FCC" (G2B). I have this on cover to Guatemala dated May 26, 1892. "Guatemala 2" gives the latest date as January 23, 1892.
2. "Trenes Locales" (G2C). My example, on loose stamp, has the word "AMBULANTE" above the date, which is 1890.
3. "Agencia Postal Ambulante" in large oval (G2H). Mark Spycher has a cover of c1894 with the lower inscription reading "ESTAF. DE -----".
4. Type (G2I). I have a part strike of 1903 reading "---UINALA A SAN JOSE", perhaps an error for "ESCUINTLA".
5. 1902-26. As "Guatemala 2" suggests, information about this period is scanty. Similar to (G2L) but 25mm in diameter, I have "AMBULANTE -- GUATEMALA"; also a 30mm double circle reading "AGENCIA POSTAL F.C.I. DE C.A." which is perhaps not a T.P.O.

   The large "AMBULANTE POSTAL F.C.C." with killer of horizontal bars (G2K) comes in two types. One of these, similar to the illustration in "Guatemala 2" but with only five bars instead of six, has 3mm characters and the route is "GUATEMALA Y AYUTLA". Both types show a numeral either side instead of the star in (G2K); I have "2" and "4" of the first type and "3" and "4" of the second. Presumably these are Clerks' numbers.
6. Duplex with a four-line route block (G2R). This comes in both thick and thin lettering, with characters respectively 4mm and 3mm high.

   No.13 in this type reads "TRECE/LINEA/RETALHULEU/CHAMPERICO" (unidentified in "Guatemala 2"). An unusual variety, struck on a 1c olive-green Tax stamp, has four rectangular blocks instead of the route number; the route is Guatemala-Puerto Barrios.
7. "SUPLENTE". I have "AMBULANTE POSTAL/SUPLENTE/ /BUZONERO 2" unframed struck on SG 402 c1939; also a part-strike similar to (G2W or G2X) with "SUPLENTE" beneath "NACIONALES".
8. Inspectors' Frank, similar to (G2BB) but with central inscription reading "INSPECCION DE/AMBULANTES". I have this on cover dated 24 March 1949 bearing two strikes of "NPOCHO/LINEA/GUATEMALA/PTO. SAN JOSE". Perhaps this is a "philatelic" item, but it may be one of the efficiency checks introduced by Lt Col Modesto Pineda, who was borrowed from the regular army in 1946 to tighten up the Ambulante service.

EARLY COSTA RICAN AIRMAILS by Bernard Davies

THE FIRST FLIGHT, 1921

Date: 10 April

Aviator: Luis Venditti, who came to Costa Rica in December 1910 to perform aerial exhibitions for the annual civic festival. He took up residence in San Jose in March 1921 and decided to make a trial flight to Nicaragua. He obtained a permit to carry mail. He was to finance his own trip; the Director of Posts, Gamaliel Noriga, gave permission for him to charge 1 colon on every piece of mail carried.

The stamps: Venditti then ordered stamps from Litografia Minerva, the artist being Antolin Chincilla. The stamps were coloured green with orange background; about 600 were sold. They were separated by a saw-tooth roulette. The lilac on orange printing is bogus; it was prepared later for philatelists.

Covers: All covers had to bear the current 5c Costa Rican stamp to pay postage; this was cancelled APR 10 1921. The unofficial air label was not cancelled, so any "used" copies must have either a faked or an accidental cancellation. Mail was returned to San Jose on 11 April to be sent by steamer "San Juan" of the Pacific Mail Line to Corinto, where it was dated 19 April, plus Managua backstamp.

The flight: Venditti took off at 11.45 a.m.; at about 12.10 he was over Chomes at 5 000m., got lost in the clouds and twenty minutes later was over Sarchi; he then lost direction totally in more clouds and got over Barra Colorado. Short of fuel, he landed on Santa Rosa plantation near Limon, breaking the propeller and the right wing of the plane. He was unhurt.

THE FLOOD RELIEF FLIGHTS of January, 1924

The San Jose to Limon railroad had been out of action since December, through heavy flooding, thereby preventing the carriage of mail across the country. There was a backlog of Christmas mail and foreign mail. Flights from San Jose to Limon were made on Jan 5, 7, 11, 12 and 13. Paulsen K. Bailey lists the quantities of mail carried on each occasion as:

Jan 5	16 722	pieces (of which 5 930 were foreign mail)
Jan 7	3 825	pieces
Jan 11	5 620	pieces (2 008 foreign)
Jan 12	18 133	pieces (5 040 foreign)
Jan 13	1 725	pieces

A further flood relief service was flown by U.S. planes on 30 December, 1927.

Meanwhile on 4 January, 1925 USA army planes on a goodwill visit carried 522 covers to the Canal Zone. A similar round trip was made on 2 January, 1926.

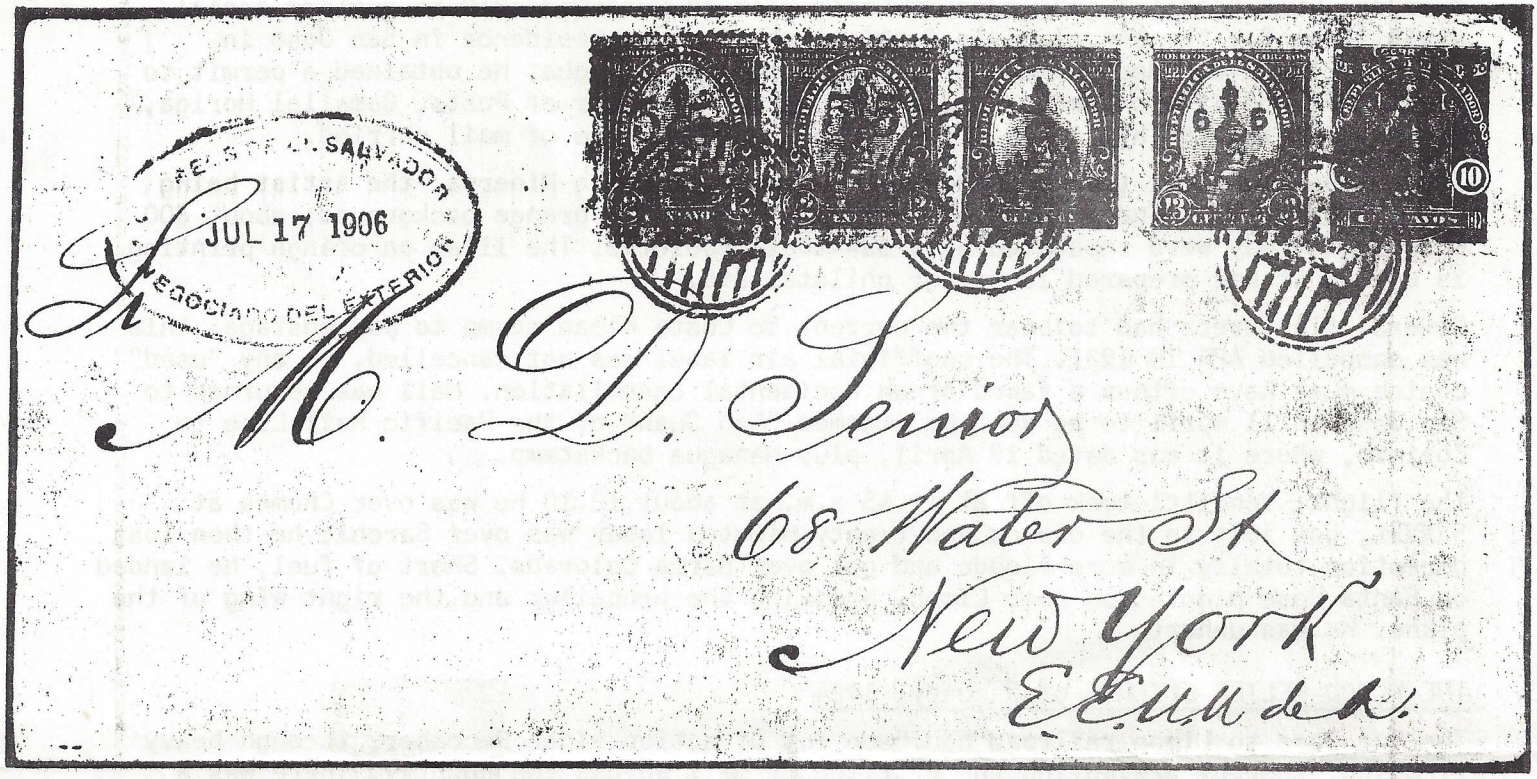
oooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooooo

CAUSERIE

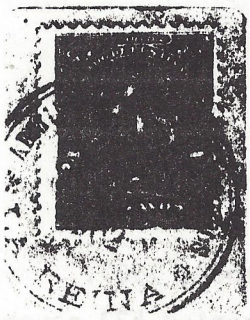
1101 Doug. Bayliss comments on Richard Washburn's CROATIA COVER: "Although I cannot venture a guess about the 6c rate, there seems no doubt that Richard Washburn's card was accepted on board the CROATIA. The Purser struck his ship straightline mark which ties one of the stamps, cancelled the stamps with pen crosses in accordance with Hapag instructions and inserted the manuscript date,

This leaves two possibilities:- 1. An error of date in the Hamburg arrival mark (I think we can rule that out.) 2. A transfer of mail to another ship, perhaps at St. Thomas, to ensure earlier arrival at destination. It may be possible to find out from Hamburg what ships docked there on 30 April 1904."

1004 Here is the promised illustration of a SALVADOR cover dated 17 Jul 1906 bearing an uncatalogued 6c on 12c in red. As our resources do not run to two-colour printing it appears in black in the illustration. Its placing on the cover as the middle stamp of five, together with its unhesitating acceptance through the international mails would seem to proclaim its "innocence".

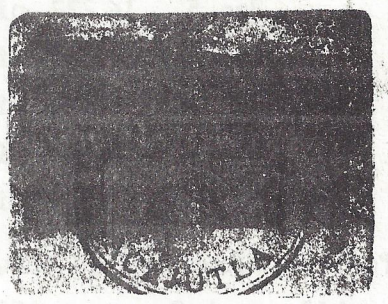


The editor has had no response to his request for information about similar items, but in the meantime he has himself discovered two interesting items on piece.



(left) La Reina, 23rd May.

1899 Dull orange Ceres with wheel, on piece.



(right) Acajutla, 10th July.

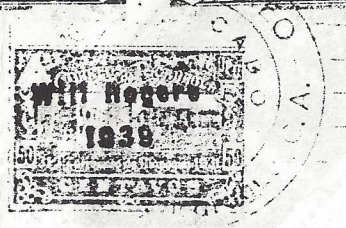
1902 Postal Stationery 1c piece with added 1898 vermilion "5" surcharge on 1c.

May 3, 1902, La Reina shows Ceres with wheel overprinted 5 on 5, and July 10, 1902 Acajutla piece of 1898 postal stationery H&G 68 has 5 on 1c of the 1898 Republica Mayor issue adhesive. A similar postal stationery "5" surcharge is listed by H&G (104-112) dated 1912. So how come it appears on adhesives postmarked 1902?

1102 Harold Walker comments on Leo Maltz's Will Rogers cover, to say that he has two covers with a 50c stamp SG 681 green, overprinted "Will Rogers/1939" in red. The name of "R B Rodriguez, Managua, D.N., Nic., C.A." which appears on the reverse side would seem to name the perpetrator, a stamp dealer. The cover is illustrated opposite.

1201 Harold Walker also seeks an explanation of a cover with airmail postage of 4C 70c on the front, and on the reverse 4C 70c of Will Rogers stamps overprinted "Timbre Telegrafico Semana de Communicaciones" and surcharged, one of the stamps being overprinted "D" in black, and two "B" in yellow. This cover is also illustrated opposite.

VIA AIR MAIL



8° ANIVERSARIO
TERREMOTO

R. B. RODRIGUEZ
MANAGUA, B[illegible] NIC., C.A.

(backstamp)

Causerie 1102

yellow "B"

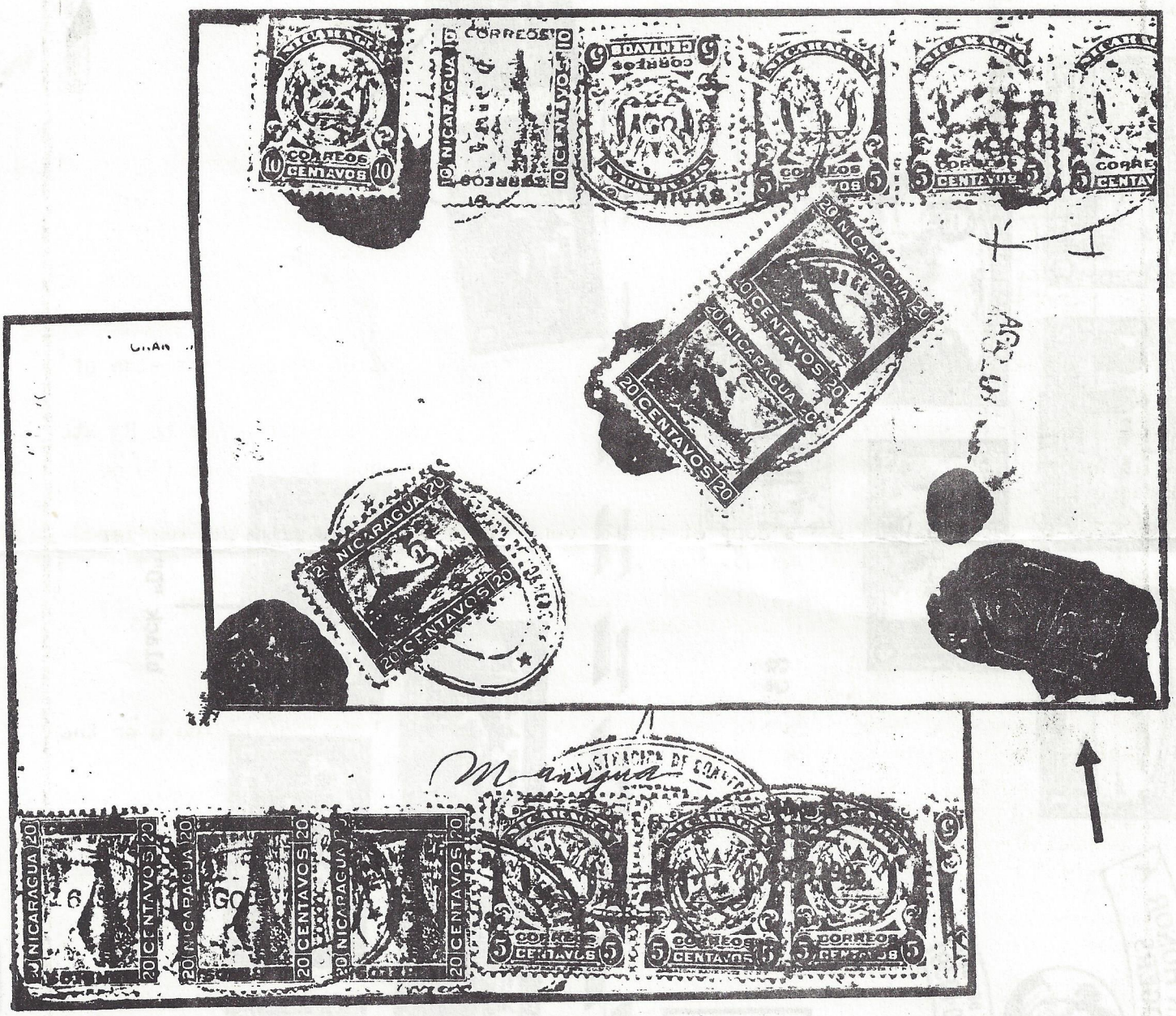
black "D"

Causerie 1103

CAUSERIE (continued)

Items 1202-1207 from D A Pocock, of Australia.

1202 In a job lot of covers recently purchased, I was interested to find a 1905 Rivas registered cover. Locally addressed to Managua it bears a mixture of Volcano 1900 20 cents (6) and ABN series of 1905 (6 x 5c + 1 x 10c). With a 5c on 10c SG 203 there is a total of 1 peso 65c postage.



However the real fascination is the registration seal on the reverse, since the five sided Rivas 2 over R postmarker has clearly been used on to the wax. Surely these numeral letter cancellations were phased out by 1890 - probably by mid 1880's, but here it is resurfacing 20 years later as a seal. I would be interested to hear through the Newsletter of other examples of this proceedure.

1203 Sanabria's Air Post Catalogue lists an essay Type EA in the section of Proofs, Essays and Specimens. To the listed colours of yellow or red can be added brown, and I suspect several others could also be added from members collections.

(Kilian Nathan says the complete set consists of 19 sheets (5 x 4) in different colours.)

1204 Essays may not be everyone's cup of tea, but an unrecorded group came my way recently and, to my limited knowledge at least, they are not commonly known. In all it consists of a set of 12 pairs of stamps which must date from 1931-2. It shows a series of pictures of the devastation caused by the earthquake of March, 1931, apart from a couple of vignettes showing buildings before the destruction - one is the G.P.O.. In fact half of pair D (see table below) is almost identical to the 1930 G.P.O. opening set except that the inscription below the building (Palacio de .....) is omitted. All have TERREMOTO 31.3.31 in the upper margin and LABOR Y RECONSTRUCCION below the design. The set of 12 pairs exist perf and imperf and both are also seen overprinted OFICIAL making 4 sets of 12 pairs. The perforation is 10½-10¾, the stamps are fully gummed and appear to be produced by photolithography. A surcharge is indicated in the right value tablet.

Value	Colour	Design	Oficial o/p Colour	Value	Colour	Design	Oficial o/p Colour
½ + ½	Reddish lilac	A*	Red	10 + 5	Pale Ultramarine	D1	Red
1 + ½	Apple Green	B1	Red	15 + 5	Orange Yellow	E1	Black
2 + 1	Rose Pink	C1	Black	20 + 10	Olive Brown	B2	Black
3 + 2	Royal Blue	D1	Red	25 + 10	Lake	C2	Black
5 + 2	Sepia	D1	Red	50 + 15	Orange Brown	D2	Black
6 + 4	Turquoise Green	A*	Red	1C + 30	Red Orange	E2	Black

* These designs are almost identical except for a slight extension of the left side of one design.

B2, C2, D2, E2: These designs are identical although the frames are different to B1 etc.

So if any more background information to these stamps can be added by readers I'd be pleased to hear about it.

1205 1909-10 Official: I have a copy of the 20 cent olive brown but with the smaller OFICIAL overprint - Gibbons 059 rather than 058. Is this bogus?

1206 Still on officials but this time from Bluefields. No Gibbons listing for:
1) the 1911 5 cent on 3 cent surcharge SG 0296.
2) 15 cent black official SG 0291.
3) 20 cent SG 286 with a script 'oficial' overprint in which the f's vary in the length of the tail.

All of the above are overprinted in addition with a B identical to the sloping B on the 3 Bluefields surcharges on 1 Peso yellow (B97-99). Could these be bogus too?

1207 Now in a similar printing style to causerie 1203, I have found another "essay". It is a vertical design showing a man with a machete in his right hand whilst his left hand supports a 4 foot high bunch of bananas beside him. The design bears no value in the empty tablet nor the word correos, but has the imprint 'LITO LA NUEVA, MANAGUA' at the base similar to the airmail essay referred to in 1203. I have examples in yellow, blue, dark green, light green and red. The paper is thick, soft and yellowish with no gum and the stamps are perforated 11½. Again perhaps others can give further details of these items.

(Kilian Nathan says there are 8 sheets (3 x 5) in different colours and denominations.)

1208 Walter Ashton asks if anyone has any reliable information regarding the dates of issue of the various printings/impressions of the SALVADOR 1879-89 issue (SG 9-16) such as are referred to in the Purves articles in the original sequence of Mainsheet.

1209 Another correspondent, who wishes to remain anonymous, asked about essays of the Nicaragua P.A.A. airmails. Of those which he illustrates at the top of the next page, Kilian Nathan, to whom the Editor appealed, states that the top row and the two left-hand examples of the lower row are genuine trial overprints/essays, but that those bearing the aeroplane silhouette are "private overprints" - i.e. bogus. The editor has a 25c orange of this "aeroplane silhouette" production. Can we identify the perpetrator, and is his full "set" a set of three?

1209
(Illustration)

AN UNUSUAL NICARAGUAN ITEM by Kilian Nathan

I send photostats of a cover I found lately, as I think this discovery is quite important.

Illustrated is a very nice 1890 cover from Masaya to Philadelphia (the smudges on the photostat do not exist on the cover) with a real "bouquet" of transit postmarks on the back. Most important however is the "BUZON" postmark from Masaya which I had never seen before. It is clearer on the cover than on the photostat! This is the earliest "BUZON" postmark I have seen so far. In addition the cover contains a charming letter, a kind of a "love-letter" nearly 100 years old!!!